



Martin Starnes & Associates, CPAs, P.A.

A Professional Association of Certified Public Accountants and Management Consultants

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT

Board of County Commissioners
Catawba County, North Carolina

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of the governmental activities, the business-type activities, the aggregate discretely presented component units, each major fund, and the aggregate remaining fund information of Catawba County, North Carolina, as of and for the year ended June 30, 2003, which collectively comprise the County's basic financial statements as listed in the table of contents. These financial statements are the responsibility of Catawba County, North Carolina's management. Our responsibility is to express opinions on these financial statements based on our audit. We did not audit the financial statements of the Catawba County ABC Board or Catawba Valley Medical Center. Those financial statements were audited by other auditors whose reports thereon have been furnished to us, and our opinion, insofar as it relates to the amounts included for the Catawba County ABC Board or Catawba Valley Medical Center is based solely on the reports of the other auditors.

We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the basic financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation. We believe that our audit and the report of the other auditors provide a reasonable basis for our opinions.

In our opinion, based upon our audit and the report of other auditors, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the respective financial position of the governmental activities, the business-type activities, the aggregate discretely presented component units, each major fund, and the aggregate remaining fund information of Catawba County, North Carolina as of June 30, 2003, and the respective changes in financial position and cash flows, where applicable, thereof, and the respective budgetary comparison for the general fund and the Water and Sewer Reserve Fund for the year then ended in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Management's Discussion and Analysis, employer contributions and the notes to the required schedules of Funding Progress, Employer Contributions, and Notes to the Required Schedules for the Law Enforcement Officers' Special Separation Allowance are not a required part of the basic financial statements but are supplementary information required by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board. We have applied certain limited procedures, which consisted principally of inquiries of management regarding the methods of measurement and presentation of the required supplementary information. However, we did not audit the information and express no opinion thereon.

In accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*, we have also issued our report dated October 2, 2003 on our consideration of Catawba County, North Carolina's internal control over financial reporting and our tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts and grants. That report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* and should be read in conjunction with this report in considering the results of our audit.

Our audit was performed for the purpose of forming opinions on the financial statements that collectively comprise the Catawba County, North Carolina basic financial statements. The introductory section, combined and individual nonmajor fund financial statements, and statistical tables are presented for purposes of additional analysis and are not a required part of the basic financial statements. The combining and individual nonmajor fund financial statements have been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audit of the basic financial statements and, in our opinion, is fairly stated, in all material respects, in relation to the basic financial statements taken as a whole. The introductory section and statistical section have not been subject to the auditing procedures applied in the audit of the basic financial statements and, accordingly, we express no opinion on them.

Martin Starnes & Associates CPAs, P.A.

Martin Starnes & Associates, CPAs, P.A.
Hickory, NC
October 2, 2003